

JOH 10:27-30 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one."

For anyone who would doubt the deity of Jesus Christ, this passage is one that drives home the truth that as human as our Lord and Savior is, He is just as truly God.

The passage before us is in the context of the statement put to Jesus by the Jewish leaders, "If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

For Jesus to answer the way He does is to redefine for these Jews what a Messiah sent from God must look like. They perceived a Messiah as a strong man, a man whose power and authority would relieve them from any subservient position as it related to their enemies, specifically, Rome.

And so, they were not looking for a Messiah who would come into the world as a humble servant, whose mission was to redeem sinful men. In their eyes Jesus was weak because He was not acting like a leader who would take them to the next level of glory in this world, as they perceived Israel as advancing back to the future, in the form of a nation like that found in Solomon’s reign.

At this point in their history many Jews were tired of being under someone else’s thumb. And though Jesus offered a glimmer of hope on different occasions, they soon learned that His interest was not in becoming an earthly king with visions of grandeur in this world.

And so, instead of answering their statement which alluded to a Messiah whose role was to conquer earthly authorities, Jesus rightly points out that the Messiah they need to come to grips with is a Messiah who is none other than God sent from heaven who has come into this world as a man whose mission is to deliver them from the bondage and penalty of sin through an atoning sacrifice.

Thus the statement which clearly points to His deity.

JOH 10:28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand."

We touched on this a bit last week as I ended with the wonderful truth that eternal life is just that, eternal. If you and I have been given life through faith in the shed blood of Christ on our behalf, and His resurrection from the dead, then the life we receive is not a life which is in danger of being anything less than eternal.

But more than that it is not in danger of being lost once we have received it which is what we saw in the other statement from Jesus, “and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.”

This is a doctrine that is often referred to as eternal security. And by that we mean that the salvation you and I enjoy in Christ is not something that we are ever in danger of losing.

Now, there is a potential danger in making such a statement because in so doing we can open the door to a misguided approach to such a salvation whereby someone might mistakenly think that they can do with this gift anything they wish, including living a life without any regard for their Savior.

But what I hope to accomplish this morning is to show us that eternal security is a life which should prompt us to have a better appreciation for our salvation rather than promote a cavalier attitude which allows us to think we can claim salvation and then sin with impunity.

When Jesus says, I give them eternal life, He is stating a truth which is undeniable, and that is that this eternal life is given as a gift. This is what Paul meant when he wrote to the Ephesian church.

EPH 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

Grace ceases to be grace once there is a prerequisite command to move toward a reward based approach to receiving such a gift. Now this does not mean that there isn't a type of command required; there most certainly is and we'll look at that in a moment, but the command I refer to does not demand to become something or do something to make yourself eligible for the gift.

For example, there are people who think that to be saved they must first clean up their lives by living in some holy state before God would consider to give them eternal life.

What this thinking translates into is a type of wage. In other words, if I do something that is pleasing to you, then you will reward me by giving me something to my benefit. We usually call this a job. I'll put in eight hours of work and you will reward me with a paycheck. In fact, this goes beyond reward because it now moves into an obligation to give me money for work I perform.

And this is precisely the point Paul was making to the church in Rome when he contrasted grace and works as it related to the gift of salvation.

ROM 4:4-5 Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. 5 However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

What Paul means by this is that if God requires us to do something to earn salvation then salvation is no longer a gift but a wage which God owes us for performing some sort of work.

And this is why he adds, "however, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness."

ROM 11:6 And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

In other words, to the man who does not try and work his way to heaven by keeping some sort of law, but who simply trusts Christ as Lord and Savior, that person receives the grace, the gift, which is freely offered to us.

That gift, according to our text is eternal life. Now earlier I said that there is a type of demand which is placed upon all men if they are to receive this gift. The demand, however has nothing to do with some sort of work to earn God's favor to get this gift, but is a demand, or maybe we should say, a command from God to simply acknowledge this gift by faith.

Luke records this truth in the book of Acts.

ACT 17:30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.

This command is to force us to consider the facts of our own sinful nature and the penalty we will suffer if we continue to reject the Messiah. It is a command to quit trying to earn salvation and

simply turn from that path of sin as we simultaneously turn to the Savior who can freely give us this gift of eternal life.

And so, it's not a command to clean up our lives before receiving eternal life, it is a command to personally acknowledge that there is nothing we could do to make ourselves clean before God, but rather we must receive His cleansing through the shed blood of Christ, which is offered to all men.

ACT 20:21 I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

And so, when Jesus says, "I give them eternal life," we can be assured that all who obey the command to turn from their sin and embrace Jesus Christ's atonement on our behalf, will most assuredly receive this free gift.

TIT 2:11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.

However, as I have been teaching throughout this study of John's gospel we must never confuse a command to repent with a natural ability on the part of people to do such.

Ephesians 2:1-2 ^{NAU} And *you were dead in your trespasses and sins,* ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

To be dead in trespasses and sins necessarily means an inability to make oneself alive by responding to a life message. Dead men don't hear or respond to anything.

So, why the command for the world to repent if the world cannot repent?

For God to make a declaration to the world that they must repent is to declare to the world that they are moving in a direction away from God and that they must turn around to God for life. The declaration in and of itself does not preclude that they will turn or that they have a desire to turn around.

The declaration simply points out the holiness of God and what is involved in coming to God. Man's hatred for God doesn't negate the command to repent it simply accentuates man's inability to respond favorably.

It's not as though God is giving this command hoping that someone will respond. He gives the command to declare what is true. And what is true?

Romans 3:10-12 ¹⁰ as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; ¹¹ THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, ***THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;*** ¹² ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, ***THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.***"

So, if the world cannot repent of their sin because they are spiritually dead and have no desire to seek for God, does this negate the command to repent and believe?

Not at all. In fact, it only demonstrates the grace of God as He takes an undeserving people out of the world and miraculously gives them eyes to see and ears to hear what God commands.

In fact, this is precisely what Paul told the Ephesians right after he has explained their former deadness in trespasses and sins.

Ephesians 2:4-7 ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ ***even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ*** (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, ⁷ ***so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.***

Only as God makes people alive are they brought from death to life in Christ which is all to show His grace and kindness toward us.

So, are you saying that only those whom God chooses to give life will actually respond?

No. That's not what I'm saying.

That's what God says.

So, those who argue that God's command for people to repent automatically assumes all men can repent just don't understand the deadness of men outside of God causing them to be born again. This is one way in which God demonstrates His holiness as well as His grace.

His holiness demands repentance, His grace provides that ability.

Outside of being born again, one cannot see the Kingdom of God, as Nicodemus was clearly told by Jesus Christ.

Well, that seems cruel. You mean that only the chosen will come to God?

Again, I defer to God for the answer.

John 6:38-39 ³⁸ "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹ ***This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing***, but raise it up on the last day.

Only those given to the Son by the Father will not be lost, but will be raised up on the last day.

Yeah, but you didn't read down far enough. Look at the next verse.

John 6:40 ⁴⁰ "For this is the will of My Father, that ***everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life***, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

See it? "Everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life."

But look at the context. Verse 40 follows verse 39 and defines who everyone who believes is: All that the Father has given the Son. Those are the ones who believe.

Unless we deny that God chooses a people for Himself and that it is a real choice based upon God's desire, not some reaction to a future action on people's part as God looked down the halls of time and chose those people who were going to choose Him anyway, then God's choosing is not really a choice.

Ephesians 1:3-4 ³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, ⁴ just as ***He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world***, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.

To choose before the foundation of the world necessarily means that God did not negotiate His choice with people, but made a choice and carried out the plan for that choice in His Son, those people whom He gave to the Son so as to raise them up on the last day, which takes us back to the security God's people have.

JOH 10:28 "... they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.

If you have placed your faith in Christ alone for your salvation what are the chances of you perishing or being disqualified for eternal life once you have received it?

The answer is zero. We shall never perish. And no one can snatch us out of the hand of the One who saved us.

Here again, Jesus is making it clear to these Jews that He is no mere ordinary man. Only God could make such a claim of first being able to give someone eternal life, and then assuring men that no one could overturn what He gave.

Many of us, at one time or another, may have entertained the idea that we had done something that might disqualify us for heaven. Maybe it was some sort of sin, maybe it was something we should have done for the Lord and didn't do and then maybe we thought, "have I blasphemed the Holy Spirit?"

By the way, let me just add that it is impossible for a true believer to blaspheme the Holy Spirit and thus not find forgiveness of sin. If it were possible then what Jesus is saying in our text is a lie; "they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand."

This does not mean that a true believer cannot grieve the Holy Spirit with behavior that dishonors Christ. Paul talks about this when writing to the Ephesians.

EPH 4:29-30 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30 ***And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.***

Notice that Paul acknowledges that we can grieve the Holy Spirit, but then quickly adds that it is the same Holy Spirit who has sealed us for the day of redemption, which is another way of saying that God's seal on us cannot be broken. He had said essentially the same thing earlier in the letter to the Ephesians.

EPH 1:13-14 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, ***you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the***

redemption of those who are God's possession - to the praise of his glory.

How many times have you heard TV ads where some car dealer or appliance dealer promises that what you bought is guaranteed to perform a certain way or that if it breaks it is guaranteed to be replaced? Yeah, right.

But when God says that we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance, which is another way of speaking of eternal life in Christ, we don't have to wonder if He is as true to His word as a car salesman.

JOH 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

But for we who have trusted in Christ for this free gift of eternal life there is a beautiful statement from Jesus which continues to drive home the point that of all that the Father gives Him, He will lose none, and it's the statement, "no one can snatch them out of my hand."

The imagery here is awesome. What about the hands of Christ? Well, on a human level they must have been hands of strength. He was, after all, a carpenter. Imagine yourself as a choice piece of wood being crafted in the hands of the master. Those are the kinds of hands you would trust with someone who knew his trade.

But more than that the hands of Christ are infinitely better than any human hands. They are hands, if you will, which are powerful enough to create and sustain the universe. Jesus Christ is, after all, the creator of all things.

JOH 1:3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

COL 1:16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

If anyone doesn't believe that Jesus Christ is the only true God and Creator, then we are all to be pitied, because our salvation depends on God being able to hold on to us. And if we relegate Jesus Christ to someone other than truly God, as well as truly man, then we automatically put our salvation into the hands of someone who is other than our Creator.

Someone might argue that Jesus doesn't need to be God to hold on to us. The Father can certainly hold us as He has commissioned His servant Jesus to die for us. But if Jesus isn't God, then He is not eligible to be our Savior. Only the perfect sacrifice can accomplish that and therefore no mere man could ever fill that role.

The only man who could accomplish our salvation had to be a man who was sinless, and without the sin nature we are all born with. This is why God the Son had to come into this world and take on flesh, become truly man, to take our place. No one else could do it.

This is why I said earlier, this passage is one of the clearest portions of the New Testament which teaches that Jesus Christ is none other than God in the flesh.

This is why we can trust His hands to hold us and never allow anyone of us in Christ to be worried of someone snatching us out of His hands, which by the way alludes to the fact that some might try that very thing.

This imagery of Jesus wrapping His hands around us gives us the sense that we are held tight and yet the enemy would love to pry back His fingers from around us. Does this mean that Satan could accomplish such a thing? Of course not. But the point is that whoever would try and take their best shot at doing such a thing is only doomed to failure.

Those hands of Jesus are the very hands which were nailed to the cross for our redemption. The blood He shed from those hands proves to us how much He loves us and will never allow anything to take us from Him.

Can you imagine God giving His Son to die for us and then allowing a mere creature, be that an angel or human being, to snatch His most prized possession out of His hand?

It will never happen as Paul clearly shows us in the book of Romans.

ROM 8:35-39 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor

any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Christ has embraced us in such a way that no one could ever dislodge from His hands what He has died for. And if that was not enough Jesus goes on to tell these Jews in our text the very Father they call God will back Him up.

JOH 10:29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.

What Jesus has just said is that both He and His Father have the same power. If these Jews will not believe that Jesus is God the Savior, who can redeem and assure men of eternal life, then maybe they'll believe that God the Father can do such a thing.

But notice that Jesus continues to place the Father in the role of sending the Son. And so, it's not as though Jesus has relinquished His role as Savior and has given it to the Father. He has simply reiterated that the Father has given all power and authority to the Son in the sense that He backs up what the Son was sent to do.

And the Father backs up the Son in such a way as to say, 'if you won't trust that My Son has the power to save and hold on to those He died for, then just know that if it were even possible for Him to lose His grip on those He saved, I will never lose My grip on them.'

What Jesus has just said is that the same power the Father has to hold on to His people is the same power Jesus has, and therefore He has once again clearly stated His deity. And this is why He adds what we see in verse thirty.

JOH 10:30 I and the Father are one."

If there was ever any doubt as to who Jesus Christ is, then this should clear it up. Now there are those who insist that what Jesus means by this statement is that both He and the Father's will are identical. And this is certainly true, but to suggest that He is not also saying that their natures are identical have entirely missed what Jesus has been saying.

What has He been teaching? He has been teaching about power. He has said, I will give them eternal life. That is power and authority that only God possesses. He says that no one can snatch

them out of my hand. And then He says that no one can snatch them out of the Father's hand.

He is clearly teaching that the power the Father has Christ has also. And so, when He says that I and the Father are One He means, according to the context, that both He and the Father are of the same essence and that is God, who share all power and authority.

What this does not mean is that both the Son and the Father are the same person. There was a heresy early on in the church which stated that when the Son wasn't busy being the Son, He was acting as the Father, and when He wasn't busy being the Father or the Son, He then became by nature and practice, the Holy Spirit.

The Scriptures clearly teach us that there is only one God.

DEU 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

There are not three Gods, there is only one God. But it is just as clear from the Scriptures that there are three distinct persons within the Godhead.

We could cite numerous passages which teach this in both the Old and New Testaments, but for sake of time one will suffice.

MAT 3:16-17 As soon as ***Jesus was baptized***, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the ***Spirit of God*** descending like a dove and lighting on him. 17 And ***a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."***

We know Jesus is God and He is certainly there at the Jordan. We know that the Holy Spirit is God and He is depicted as a dove descending on and empowering Jesus for His work. And we know that the Father is God whose voice from heaven says, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

All three persons of the Godhead are present at the same time in that text. How do we explain that there is one God in three persons? As I've said before, if I could fully explain the eternal and infinite God with my finite mind then I wouldn't be here this morning, I'd be on the road explaining my new book.

Yes, this aspect of the nature of God is a mystery, but what He has revealed in nature and His word must be believed and taught and we must glory in the fact that God has revealed anything about Himself.

He is under no obligation to reveal Himself to you and me, and yet because He desires that we share in His eternity, as we come into a personal relationship with Him, He has graciously revealed Himself in these last days through His Son whom He sent into this world to redeem us as He has paid for our guilt of sin on the cross.

What love He has for us. And the question we raised at the beginning of this study is if we have such an assurance of our salvation how should that affect us? Should we view such an assurance as insurance where we can then do what we want in light of the sin we've been delivered from?

The grace of God is an amazing thing and even the apostle Paul understood the dangers of thinking that God's grace can be used to justify our indulgence into a life of sin.

ROM 5:20-21 The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, 21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ROM 6:1-2 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

The thinking Paul puts forward is that if God's grace increases where sin abounds, then why not sin in abundance to taste the amazing grace of God in abundance?

It's faulty thinking. And to suggest that simply because Jesus and the Father will never let anyone or anything snatch us from their hands, that we can justify our sin, then we abuse the grace and love of God, and we grieve the very Holy Spirit who has sealed us for the day of redemption as we give a wrong testimony to the world of who we belong to.

Now, we all know that we still sin, but we never want to be satisfied with a life of sin as we at the same time tell people that Christ has given us eternal life. Grace is a gift and eternal life is a gift which will never perish and we know for certain that such grace will bring us home to be with our God forever. But grace must be received by us and practiced graciously in the presence of our God in the power of His Spirit to the glory of Christ.

TIT 2:11-14 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness

and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.